

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

# *Quarterly News-Letter*



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The Unfolding of Its Scholarly & Publishing Achievements*

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# *The University of California Press Turns* **ONE HUNDRED**

## *The Unfolding of Its Scholarly & Publishing Achievements*

PREFACE: *By the mid-Twentieth Century, the University of California Press was launched on a course that would lead to its international prominence as one of America's greatest university presses, a distinguished publisher of scholarly books, serial monographs, and journals. The Press also played a major role in the development of book design and printing in the western United States. In the years I worked at the Press, 1963-1985, the Press grew from annual sales of \$700,000 to \$7,000,000 and since has grown to about double that figure. What follows are reviews of two entirely separate historical accounts of the Press. Robert D. Harlan reviews the broad, intellectual history by August Frugé and I review the Albert Muto history of the Press's early years.*

—HARLAN KESSEL, EDITOR

## *A Skeptic Among Scholars*

WRITTEN BY AUGUST FRUGÉ, REVIEWED BY ROBERT D. HARLAN

*"...a revelation, and it will become a classic in its genre"*

To commemorate the centenary of its founding the University of California Press has produced two distinguished books treating its history to 1976, the year August Frugé retired as its director. The first is *A Skeptic Among Scholars: August Frugé on University Publishing*. The second, Albert Muto's *The University of California Press: The Early Years, 1893-1953*, reviewed below by Harlan Kessel, provides the definitive account of the Press's first sixty years, from its origins as printer to the university, including the subsidized monographic series, to the establishment under Samuel T. Farquhar of a printing and publishing program of considerable interest. There is some overlap between Muto's and Frugé's books (Frugé joined the Press in 1944), but the repetitiveness seems slight since the approaches of the two authors are so different, Muto's being that of the detached observer while Frugé's is a personal memoir.

Frugé has organized his book to provide both a topical and a chronological treatment. It is comprehensive and cohesive, and it is fascinating, presenting a compelling story engagingly told. I know of no other work that provides so intimate and candid an account of the nature of American university press publishing. It is a revelation, and it will become a classic in its genre.



The initial chapters provide historical and some personal background, including a nostalgic depiction of the pre-agitated Berkeley of the 1940s and an appreciative account of the Press under his predecessor Samuel T. Farquhar. The nature of the university faculty's Editorial Committee and its role in Press publications is also described. Frugé moves on to the first major challenge to his efforts to develop a book publishing program in the Oxbridge tradition: How to achieve independence from the university business office and also separation from the printing department. The faculty, in particular its Editorial Committee, proved to be the strongest ally, with some unhappy exceptions, primarily because it wielded considerable influence with the university administration. Early evidence of the growing alliance between faculty and Press was the faculty's decision in 1957 to make Frugé a member of the powerful Academic Senate. President Clark Kerr's decisions to sever all ties between the Press and the printing department and to place the Press under the Academic Vice-President, statewide, were major victories. Frugé notes that the divorce from the printing department was not amicable. The Press and probably the printing department experienced considerable relief when in 1962 the Press finally vacated the printing building on Oxford and Center Streets, Berkeley.

The middle section, each chapter a self-contained essay, describes some of the distinguished publishing fields and specific projects developed by the Press. Once aware of this, the reader may well be tempted to indulge in personal preference in selecting what to read first. One might begin with the chapter on the classics, "Where to Look for Books: Athens in Berkeley"; or with "Looking West to East: Pel and the Asian Book," an area developed by editorial chief Philip E. Lilienthal whose work Frugé regards as "the finest editorial effort I have ever witnessed"; or with its account of Ishi in Theodora Kroeber's *Ishi in Two Worlds*, a Press best-seller to the present day; or "Hollywood and Berkeley: Getting into the Film Business." Frugé credits the Press with the first systematic attempt of any university press to publish books in this field. And then there is art history. The advice solicited from another press director publishing in this area ended with a blessing (or warning): "May God go with you." Frugé would have cause to recall these words when the protracted and expensive production of *The Plan of St. Gall* nearly brought the Press to its knees. This mammoth enterprise is further described in Addendum II, James H. Clark's "Publishing *The Plan of St. Gall*." Frugé's title for this chapter is "Mega Biblion: Exposing the Press to Art History." Among other chapters are the Pepys *Diary*, and The Mark Twain Papers.

Concluding chapters turn to aspects of production and publication, including design, finance, and sales. "The Book as Artifact: Design and Printing"

reviews in some detail the Press's design accomplishments under Samuel T. Farquhar, including the creation of University of California Old Style typeface by Frederic W. Goudy. With the death of Farquhar the old design team was broken up. Frugé opted for free-lance designers. His choice of Ward Ritchie, Adrian Wilson, and John B. Goetz resulted in award-winning work. "The Bird That Was Overdue for Evolution: And Other Tales of Financial Wars" should be required reading for anyone interested in the travails of book publishing. The financial and administrative challenges confronting the Press, as described by Frugé, are epic in scale. Frugé identifies these adversaries in particular: "the union, the personnel office, the computer," and an "editor from Davis." "Waiting for the God from the Machine" includes shrewd appraisals and a few predictions on the new technology and the so-called demise of the codex and the state of the learned press in America.

Quite fittingly, Frugé's work has been designated by the Press as one of its Centennial Books, published between 1990 and 1995, "as an example of the Press's finest publishing and bookmaking traditions." Just how remarkably fine those traditions are is fully documented in this notable work.

George Altman  
Ralph Freud  
Kenneth Macgowan  
William Melnitz

## THEATER PICTORIAL



*A History of World Theater  
as Recorded in Drawings, Paintings,  
Engravings, and Photographs*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

Berkeley and Los Angeles 1953

*Design assistant Rita Carroll brought the Press theater programs printed by Adrian Wilson for the Interplayers in San Francisco and suggested they ask him to try his hand at designing a book. It was probably Wilson's first book commission and was followed by many others, at least five in 1951. Theater Pictorial (1953) was one of Wilson's favorites.*



## *The University of California Press: The Early Years, 1893-1953*

WRITTEN BY ALBERT MUTO, REVIEWED BY HARLAN KESSEL

*"...a fine piece of publishing history"*

"The university without the printing press would be like an orator without a voice; its influence would be restricted to those who could watch his gestures and lips," said Daniel Coit Gilman, then President of Johns Hopkins University, in 1878. He also pointed out that the *ownership* of a printing press was of secondary importance; the primary purpose being to publish the results of scholarly research and to disseminate that knowledge as widely as appropriate. It is interesting to note that Gilman served as the second President of the fledgling University of California and, later, as the first President of Johns Hopkins University, the two oldest, continuously operating university presses in the United States. Gilman's administration (1872-75) at Berkeley was politically rocky and ended with his resignation in disgust at the political pressure of the Grangers, California's powerful agricultural lobby, which accused Gilman of "teaching rich lawyers' boys Greek with the farmers' money." Gilman's departure caused a now-wiser state legislature to create a Board of Regents with constitutional status and to give them relative independence from the university's political oppressors.

Gilman's influence on the Californians he left behind was great. He might well be considered the grandfather of the University of California Press, founded in 1893 with a mere \$1,000, we learn in Albert Muto's superb new book *The University of California Press: The Early Years, 1893-1953*, another of the Press's Centennial Books series. Joseph C. Rowell, university librarian (and a former secretary to President Gilman!), was the first to call officially for "establishing some kind of University bulletin or other publication wherein can be published results of research and work by members of the various faculties..., as a medium of exchange [with university and research libraries around the world]." Thus was born not only the Press but the quantum growth of the library itself, on the Berkeley Campus, one of the greatest library collections in the world. The gifts and exchange practice, operated through the Press, led to Berkeley's accessions of important works held not even to the present day by the Library of Congress.

And who were the Press's earliest authors? Astonishingly politically correct for the period, they were a man, Geology Professor Andrew C. Lawson, and a woman, Milicent Washburn Shinn, she the author of *Notes on the Development of a Child*, a monographic precursor to the work of pediatrician

Benjamin Spock. Muto is the first to discover that "it was their efforts [Lawson and Shinn], that kept the University's publishing program going through the last years of the nineteenth century, relying for nearly a decade on the single appropriation of \$1,000."

A monographic press it was to remain during the Benjamin Ide Wheeler regime that followed, 1899-1919, during which time dozens of series disciplines were established, flourished, and distributed by gift and exchange. The first actual book, or "Separate Work," actually published by the Press was also by a woman, Zelia Nuttall's *The Book of the Life of the Ancient Mexicans* a magnificently and colorfully illustrated codex then in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence, Italy. It is available to this day in a U.C. Press facsimile edition with a commentary volume by Elizabeth Hill Boone of Dumbarton Oaks.

Women were also early and crucial sponsors of Press authors and projects: Phoebe Apperson Hearst (Milicent Shinn, Alfred Kroeber, Julia Morgan, *ad infinitum* it would seem), Jane K. Sather (The Sather Classical Lectures, surely the greatest classical series ever published), Mrs. William H. Crocker and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid (Zelia Nuttall and others).

In 1933 the Samuel T. Farquhar Era began, and what developed was a new definition of the Press as a serious publisher of trade books and scholarly titles, attractively designed and offered at reasonable prices, in order to reach the widest possible audience. New and important journals were established as well. By the early 1940s the Press had developed a system of commission sales representatives covering bookstores in every area of the United States. Most of these sales representatives also represented the prestigious literary house Farrar, Straus, & Rinehart (now Giroux) but the point is that the Press had by then achieved nationwide distribution and, in addition, was represented in most parts of the world by Cambridge University Press, London. Farquhar, ever the fine printer and man of taste, brought Wilder Bentley from Pennsylvania to serve as sales manager but the alliance was brief, and Bentley was moved out and on to a more productive career as a San Francisco Bay Area fine printer. His successor, Bill Garrett, was more trade-oriented but even he resigned in frustration and then joined the Sather Gate Bookshop, Berkeley. After that, more than a handful of sales managers presided until I was appointed to the position in the early sixties.

Early on, in those days, I greatly admired the elegant typographic designs of the Farquhar period, many of which I now see reproduced (in two colors, thank you) in Muto's book. Readers, look especially for Goudy's *Typologia* and *The Alphabet*, Virginia More Roediger's *Ceremonial Costumes of the Pueblo Indians* (designed by Samuel T. Farquhar and Amadeo R. "Tommy")



# THE DANCER'S QUEST

*Essays on the Aesthetic of the Contemporary Dance*

BY ELIZABETH SELDEN



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS  
BERKELEY · CALIFORNIA · 1935

*The Dancer's Quest, the first Press book to be chosen by the AIGA show of the Fifty Books of the Year. Designed by Samuel T. Farquhar and Fred E. Ross.*



Tommasini), and Elizabeth Selden's *The Dancer's Quest* (designed by Farquhar and Fred E. Ross), and examples of early Ward Ritchie and Adrian Wilson designs. I learned to appreciate fine design and professional publishing through the better part of the Frugé years and, from 1977 through 1985, during James H. Clark's directorship of the Press, which continues to the present. The Press seems to surpass, I am pleased to observe year after year, its tradition of publishing great scholarly works in the finest manner.

Albert Muto's *The University of California Press, The Early Years, 1893-1953* is a fine piece of publishing history. It deals with the fundamental issues of book publishing, not merely for university press publishing but for trade, journal, and scientific publishing as well. It is also beautifully designed by Barbara Jellow and handsomely illustrated with photographs and title page reproductions—all in all one of the most pleasing presentations of a publishing house history that one might wish to have, surpassed, perhaps, by Oxford and Cambridge University Press histories but then, four hundred years, plus or minus, gives them a slight edge.

ROBERT D. HARLAN is Professor Emeritus, University of California School of Library and Information Studies, Berkeley, where he established and taught a contemporary publishing course for several years. Among other works, he is the author of *John Henry Nash: The Biography of a Career*, University of California Press, Chapter Nine: *The Vulgate Bible & Other Unfinished Projects of John Henry Nash*, and *The Two Hundredth Book*, the latter titles published by The Book Club of California. He lives in San Francisco.

HARLAN KESSEL is Editor of the Quarterly News-Letter and a member of the Book Club's Publications Committee. He has been a trade and educational publisher in New York with G. P. Putnam's Sons and The Macmillan Company and, for 21 1/2 years, the marketing director for the University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, retiring in 1985. He recently retired from the Board of Directors, East Bay Regional Park District, Oakland, California. He lives in Oakland.



BOOKS CITED: *A Skeptic Among Scholars: August Frugé on University Publishing* by August Frugé, University of California Press, 1993, 365 pp, 60 illustrations, \$40 cloth, \$12.95 paper.

*The University of California Press: The Early Years, 1893-1953* by Albert Muto, University of California Press, 1993, 319 pp, 70 illustrations, \$30.

MAKING THE CHANGE TO PLASTIC

## *A Chance to Grow*

MARY McDERMOTT & SUSAN ACKER

There has been much discussion over the past year or so about the integrity, or lack of it, in printing fine letterpress work from computer-generated plastic plates rather than from handset metal type. Indeed, it has raised a veritable tempest in the letterpress teapot. The same authorities who said it couldn't be done now pontificate on the subject, breathless from the scramble for the bandwagon. The process involves typesetting in a computer, then having a service bureau generate a film negative from the computer disk. A platemaking machine is used to expose a thin steel plate coated with photosensitive polymer resin to the negative. The platemaker, about four feet high and 2x2 feet square, consists of stacked units: vacuum table and ultraviolet light for exposure, basin with rotating plateholder and brushes for washout with water, and a small oven for hardening. The plates are mounted type-high on blocks and printed as usual. More details about the process can be found in Thomas Taylor's excellent article in the October 1992 issue of *Bookways*, which assuaged our lingering fears, influenced our decision to invest in a platemaker, and provided the information we needed when we went ahead.

This is an account of the Feathered Serpent Press's cautious step forward into the Twentieth Century. Now we are able to combine the best of the old with the best of the new. This forty-year-old letterpress shop may have one foot firmly planted in the present, but the other remains stubbornly rooted in the Nineteenth Century.

When visitors jingle the brass bells and enter the Feathered Serpent Press, they usually pause a moment to take it all in: The antique presses (a Colt's Armory, a Prouty, large and small proof presses, an old English hand press), massive guillotine paper cutter, etching press, tabletop hand and nipping presses, cases of type, memorabilia everywhere, and, of course, the perfume of ink and paper. Now, nestled comfortably amidst it all is a Polimero platemaker, looking quite at home and, to us at least, just as lovable. As Leda Black said when she showed us hers, "It's just like a toy oven." It does somehow have the air of a plaything, adorned with cheery yellow fittings and taking up less than half the space of a typecase; but the thing is a serious tool. To us, that's the main point.

Neither the ambiance of the shop nor our pride of craftsmanship has changed. Making the plates is relatively simple once procedures are established and learned. Printing is the same as ever. The few differences are those



which can only please the pressroom veteran: No workups, no worn type, no lugging lead or cutting letters to fit. We don't feel the need to cling to all that. As far as we're concerned, letterpress printing is not about the hardships involved; it's about creating beautiful pages and having the independence to print them ourselves. We can do that better now that we have a platemaker.

Design and typesetting for the plates usually takes place in the computer. This seems to be the main problem for diehard type aficionados, whose objections generally come down to "It's just not the same," now that it's no longer possible to claim composition can't be done as beautifully on the darned thing as it can be done by hand. They are right: It isn't the same—it can be better. What's true of the platemaker is true of the computer. It's just a tool. We put the same care into setting pages on the computer as we did setting them by hand, but we have more options; actually more skill and discretion are required: Type can be sized within one tenth of a point, spacing is infinitely variable, as is kerning, but the computer doesn't do it. *We do!* To all you patrons out there who may think that this is too easy, *don't worry!* These pages still come from our hands and our hearts. Our shop is still filled with metal types nestled like jewels in their cases. They are treasures and we treat them as such. Sometimes nothing else will do, but please don't insist that we print with them exclusively!

For the Feathered Serpent Press, the platemaker was a big investment and we didn't make it quickly. We experimented with making plates by hand first and found that it could be done successfully without much expense, except of our time in rigging our homemade setup. The sometimes printer who can't justify purchasing a machine could do the same. Here's what we did:

We created a page in our computer and took it on diskette to our local service bureau, where we asked that it be printed negative to film, right reading, emulsion up.

We ordered a small amount of plate material. The problem was to expose the plate to the negative, much as a photograph is printed on paper. The plates are sensitive to black light, so we purchased two small bulbs of the proper wave length for twenty-five dollars. The bulbs look like fluorescent tubes and fit into the same type of fixture, so all we had to do was rig them about three inches over a table, and we had a platemaker! (We had already succeeded in making plates just using sunlight, but using an artificial light source naturally gave us more control over the process, as exposure times in sunlight vary according to time of day and year.) With our homemade platemaker we simply placed the film on the plate, emulsion down, made a sandwich of glass, film, and plate, put it under the light and gave it a basic exposure of about three minutes. Exposure takes some adjusting, depending on the nature of the graphic or type with which one is working.

Next we washed the exposed plate with a soft brush and warm water, blew it dry with a hair dryer, and gave it another brief exposure to harden it. We were ready to print.

We needed a base for the plate to make it type-high. We could have nailed it to wood just as we did magnesium photoengravings, but it's easier to work with a magnetized block of metal. These aren't inexpensive, so we decided to make our own blocks. We ordered thick aluminum cut to size and glued on flexible magnetic sheets, the kind found on refrigerator magnets. *Voila!* We called these blocks our *Serpmags* and found that they worked very well. We still use them now that we have graduated to machine-made plates.

The freedom and independence platemaking ability brought to the Feathered Serpent Press have inspired renewed excitement and creativity. We are hard at work finding ways to combine two lifetimes' worth of skills in printing, etching, drawing, and photography with new computer and platemaking skills, working with photographs to create photo etchings from negatives which have been manipulated and enhanced with art in the computer. We are confident that we are on the way to a beautiful new form of art. As far as we know, we are pioneers in this area.

We love our work. We love letterpress. And we love our computer! It has resulted in new community with computer graphic designers who till now were excluded from the world of letterpress. The bookmaking community has been the beneficiary of a renewed interest in type fostered by the emergence of desktop publishing. A renaissance in type design has been the result. The new work is growing ever more refined. It hasn't taken long if one considers the centuries it took for the letterforms to evolve.

In any event, the processes discussed here are accessible to any resourceful basement or garage printer, including those who have resisted the computer's incursion. Plates can be made easily with negatives from any kind of artwork, including calligraphy or hand lettering.

We are convinced that the new opportunities for creative work we now enjoy will enhance and invigorate the development of the book arts. We expect to see more and better letterpress printing. We expect a new and appreciative audience for fine work. We hope that even more letterpress printers will plunge in. This is a chance for us to grow.



MARY McDERMOTT & SUSAN ACKER *work together at the Feathered Serpent Press.*



# What is an Artist's Book, Anyway?

ADELA SPINDLER ROATCAP

The Artist's Book is no infant newcomer to the book scene—nor need we expect its imminent demise. Born during the worst of times—when the French and American Revolutions made up the frightful news of the day—the very concept of *livre d'artiste* is rooted in the Romantic notion of the artist as individual genius. William Blake, poet, artist, and philosopher, is the patron saint of the Artist's Book. His primary purpose was the discovery and recording of new truths about the human soul. He engraved and colored these discoveries in his books by a process he called “Illuminated Printing,” following a method revealed to him (he said) by the spirit of his dead brother. Most people thought him mad and left him alone.

In 1825, while Blake was still at work on his *Book of Job*, the young French artist Eugene Delacroix, on a visit to London, saw a performance of Goethe's *Faust*. Delacroix was also a Romantic, a rebel in art, anti-classical in his use of color, and among the first to use the then-new technique of lithography. He had something original to say and had to invent his own graphic language to say it. To unveil the new is the mission of the artist. Goethe approved: “M. Delacroix has surpassed the scenes my writing has conjured up in my own imagination; how much more will readers of the book find his compositions full of reality....” Delacroix's *Faust* inspired theatrical personages to convey with greater understanding the sublime tragedy of the story.

Blake's books did not languish long. On April 20, 1847, eighteen-year-old Dante Gabriel Rossetti purchased Blake's Notebook. Just then the British Museum was in the process of acquiring Blake's *Book of Job*. Rossetti and his friend William Morris (they met in 1856) were assiduous patrons of the reading rooms of the British Museum. Rossetti aided Blake's biographer, Alexander Gilchrist, and used Blake's color schemes in his Pre-Raphaelite paintings. He prevailed on Morris to devote himself to painting as well as to poetry. Morris produced a number of calligraphic pages, some of them painted by himself.

Art demands from the artist the taking of infinite pains—and that is what William Morris, designer, businessman, and socialist, did, after 1891, with his Kelmscott Press. He strove for unity, controlling every aspect of the printing of a book, from type to paper and ink, from illustration to binding. Can we look at the Kelmscott *Chaucer* and deny its position as the towering monument among Nineteenth Century Artist's Books? Imagine Auguste Rodin's face as he turned, for the first time, the pages of the Kelmscott *Chaucer* presented to him by an enthusiastic Bernard Shaw. It was not just the typography, but

the general configuration, the size of the book, its paper, its illustrations, and the harmony of its pages that marked the Kelmscott *Chaucer* as an Artist's Book, not just another typographical book—because the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It *is* an Artist's Book, and as is the case with all great art, it demands quiet time from the viewer. Contemplate it, read it aloud, and relish the cadences of Chaucer's Middle English. Can one comprehend Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel at a glance? Even a Fabergé egg must be turned around, again and again, to be fully appreciated and understood.

Early in the Twentieth Century, bibliophiles such as Ambroise Vollard, Cyril W. Beaumont, Sergei Diaghilev, or Count Harry Kessler, persons to whom design, style, and taste in books mattered, took it upon themselves to become, like William Morris, impresarios of the Artist's Book. Diaghilev admonished Jean Cocteau to "Astonish me!" and then brought together the French artists Marie Laurencin and Georges Braque and the expatriate American Man Ray to create fabulous Artist's Books. In Weimar, Kessler played Svengali to Edward Gordon Craig, Aristide Maillol, Edward Johnson, and Eric Gill. Kessler's Cranach Press *Hamlet* is surely the most elegantly classical, finely designed Artist's Book produced during this century. Not just the type and the paper, not just the beautifully designed pages, but the woodblocks, the miracle of black printed on black achieved by Harry Gage-Cole! These Artist's Books are the joint achievement of artist, designer, typographer and craftsperson, each doing his best under the direction of a person of impeccable taste, an extraordinary guide. The Cranach Press *Hamlet's* only rival for first place among great Twentieth Century Artist's Books is, in this writer's opinion, Henri Matisse's *Jazz*—lush beyond reason, a symphony of intense, velvety color combined with the bold handwriting of the artist and produced on folio pages by the technique of *pochoir*.

Today it is usually the publisher who chooses a book's artist or designer. Contemporary books require sophisticated technology in order to be produced. Seldom does the artist have access to the complex machinery of production and marketing. Some, like book artist Albert Ferrer in Barcelona, however, are able to control the production and distribution of their books. Few publishers share the discerning vision of Andrew Hoyem, who, with Jim Dine, Robert Motherwell, and others, created masterpieces among contemporary Artist's Books. One admires, as in Hoyem's *Flatland* or *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, his elegant solutions to the problem of combining metal with paper in the creation of Artist's Books.

Great Artist's Books reflect the individual persona of their creators. *Jazz* is about Henri Matisse as *Job* is about Blake or *Parallèlement* about Pierre Bonnard. William Morris's great *Chaucer* demonstrates his overwhelming enthusiasm and the strength of his collaboration with Edward Burne-Jones.



Is the reflection once removed.  
The glass chose to reflect only what he saw  
Which was enough for his purpose: his image  
Glazed, embalmed, projected at a 180-degree angle.  
The time of day or the density of the light

①

*Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*

AS Parmigianino did it, the right hand  
Bigger than the head, thrust at the viewer  
And swerving easily away as though to protect  
What it advertises. A few leaded panes, old beams,  
Fur, pleated muslin, a coral ring run together

*Text page from Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror, by John Ashbery, Arion Press, 1984.  
The text is set in lines that radiate as spokes from a hub so the pages are literally turned to  
be read. The volume is contained in a steel canister with a convex mirror on the lid.*

The impresario/publisher of today tends to look with favor upon established artists and well known texts. And who can really blame him? Economy rules and name recognition prevails. Why take chances? One fears that the days of Morris, Kessler, Diaghilev, and Vollard—who understood that magnificent paper, excellent typography, exquisite illustrations and binding do not in themselves constitute an Artist's Book—have come to an end. Something original must result, something significantly new. There are advances in art as well as in science and technology. An Artist's Book presupposes the work of an individual who will grapple with the problems of art and establish new frontiers of artistic creation. Consider Blaise Cendrars's *La Prose du Transsiberien et de la petite Jehanne de Franc*, that long poem which Sonia Delaunay, in a spirit of fun, printed *en pochoir* to create a visual impression of the text and then bound with a collage of paper and fabric. Does a book have to be a codex, Delaunay asked? May one fold the paper and call it a book? To create original style—there is the rub! Imitation may be the most sincere form of flattery, yet let's have no more look-alike Delaunay, no more ersatz Morris! But, you say, the great architects of the Modern style (such as Picasso, who created over 150 books) have passed on to artist's heaven! Can it be possible that everything has already been accomplished? Is the Artist's Book an endangered species because contemporary artists lack the ingenuity to create original styles? Is there a plethora of contemporary Blakes languishing unrecognized, slowly and patiently, amidst grinding poverty, creating marvelous books? Art passes into history in capricious ways. We must wait, dear reader, and see. Lastly, it is absolutely true that to comprehend the past, the present, and the future in Artist's Books the viewer must know the difference between art and the latest fad. Shoes are not Artist's Books even though one might read a shoe before trying it on. Leonardo's *Last Supper* printed on damp lasagna is not an aesthetic statement of any merit. Torn paper scattered in a box of solid gold does not an Artist's Book make. One watches the world unfold and wonders whether the problem is lack of interest or just a contemporary lack of taste. Rest easy, perplexed reader—the Artist's Book is certainly not dead. Why, if the Artist's Book ever did give up the ghost, we would have to re-invent it!

ADELA SPINDLER ROATCAP is an art historian, lecturer, and writer. The Book Club recently mounted an exhibit (with the same title as this article) selected from her personal collection of Artist's Books. She lives in San Francisco.



## Gifts & Acquisitions

From Rosalie Reynolds, widow of famed California book dealer Jack Reynolds, the Club has received several invaluable David Magee items which she has donated to our Magee shelf, and for which we are delighted.

The first of these is a unique copy of *My Ascent of Grizzly Peak*, by David Catt, privately printed by the Grabhorn Press for a few friends, Christmas, 1950. There were fifty copies only of this amusing story by—reportedly—David's house cat. Ours has a long holograph addition on the two pages of the colophon—a continuation of the story—not published! With this amusing booklet is a letter of transmittal to the Reynoldses, dated October 17, 1972, on the mailing of this item to them. Also included is a four-page printed *Announcement* // *A new Book by David Catt*—"to be printed at the Grabhorn Press and distributed by the author's friends, David and Dorothy Magee, and (by remote control) Jane and Bob Lundin." This two-color announcement contains a holograph note that reads, "David Catt grew lazier and lazier and older and older and he never did get around to writing..." signed, David Magee (n.d.).

Rosalie includes an amusing printed bookplate that David had Robert Grabhorn print to cover a batch of un-removable bookplates in a large collection that David had acquired. This reads, "Ex Libris /(ornament)/ R. Magee Smythe."

Another piece in the gift in an eight-page Knopf mailer, the "Borzo Battledore" for July 1946, which contains an article by David Magee on the immortal Alice, *The Fourth of July, 1862*, with illustrations by Lewis Carroll. This is not a spoof, but a factual account of how Alice's adventures came to be written.

And last, Rosalie sent along a 4 x 8 inch wooden plate engraved by David Kindersley on the occasion of David's presidency of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers in 1967.

All of these "goodies" will find a happy place on the Magee shelf, which contains the writings and published work of David Magee. Our thanks to dear Rosalie for giving us these unusual "Magees."

Unaccountably, we forgot to acknowledge with thanks a second gift that member Frank Venneri made to the Club some time ago. With belated thanks and an apology, we now record here a copy of *The Vollbehr Incunabula and the Book of Books*, an address by Frederick W. Ashley before the Eleventh National Conference of Printing Education, Library of Congress, June, 1932. This is a folio bound in parchment wrappers, the cover printed in two colors. It is an impressive account of this great purchase by the Government, printed

in three colors in Cloister types in two columns of forty-two lines each. It was designed and printed by George H. Carter and signed by him; ours is number 127 of the edition of 420 copies. Carter was the Public Printer of the United States, and this was printed by him in the Government Printing Office.

On Monday, May 17, long-time member William M. Roth visited the Club rooms and presented the library with a unique example of Jane Grabhorn's fine binding, a binding housing the first edition of Jane Austen's *Three Evening Prayers*, which was published by his and Jane's renowned Colt Press in San Francisco, 1940. This exquisite creation is bound in citron morocco with tooled and gold onlays and with the Mallette Dean pressmark expertly rendered in gold tooling on the inside of the front cover. The book was preserved with a chemise and covered box made by William Wheeler, a long-time bookbinder for the Grabhorn Press. This charming book was designed by Jane, but was set in type—in capitals throughout—by Harold Seeger, and was printed for the Colt Press by Lawton Kennedy.

The Club is, of course, more than pleased to have another example of a fine binding done by a Club member. This will join our growing collection of fine bindings by members. Our sincere thanks to Mr. Roth for this unique example of her work as a binder by his partner, Jane Grabhorn.

From our librarian we have received three interesting and somewhat important books that will fit well in our collection of early San Francisco printing. The first is *Governor Thurmond's Bird House*, by Lillian Hudson, printed for John J. Newbegin by the Blair-Murdock Co., 1915. The second—curiously, another “bird” book—*What the Birds Did in Hazel's Orchard*, Edward Eichenberg, again, printed for Newbegin, but this one by John Henry Nash, in 1916. Both copies are almost pristine—hardly, if ever, opened. The last item is a bit more important: *San Francisco One Hundred Years Ago*, being a translation from the French of Louis Choris, by Porter Garnett, and printed for A. M. Robertson, another early San Francisco bookseller, by Taylor & Taylor, 1913.

Since we received the incredible collection of Magee memorabilia from Mrs. Jack Reynolds, local friends who learned of it wanted to get “in the act.” The most important new item was David's only novel, *Jam Tomorrow*, published by Houghton Mifflin, 1941. This was a joint gift of Ann Whipple and Barbara Land. The book has a typical inscription by David and is in excellent condition. And the last seems to have come “over the transom.” We received the original printed title of the elephant Audubon of the California Condor which hung in David's shop, entitled *Our Founder*.

And from our *forever* friend Toni Savage of Leicester, England, we have his latest batch of Phoenix Broad-sides, now up to number 385, this including

two unusual ones of Spike Milligan, a poem titled *The Dancer*. Both are printed on a blue handmade paper, one watermarked with Spike's autograph, and the second watermarked with a sheep or lamb. Both are charming. Number 382, by Don J. Carlson, reproduces a drawing by Robert Trilling, R. I., who has contributed many drawings for poems in the past, but this one was produced for the exhibition of Trilling's paintings at the Jersey Arts Center, May 1993. As always, we are indeed thankful to Toni, our contributing printer of longest standing.

We have acquired another interesting and important book on the early history of letterpress color printing in England, *Benjamin Fawcett, 1808-1893*. The book was designed and printed for the Sclar Press by Laurie and Antonia McLean in an edition of 750 copies, of which twenty-one are not for sale; our copy is numbered 554. On hearing of this item, we immediately checked the printer in Bigmore & Wyman's *A Bibliography of Printing*—he's not mentioned! And a blank as well in *Printing and the Mind of Man*! Why? For some peculiar reason no one ever wrote about Fawcett in his time, including his relatives or employees. It was not until McLean tackled the mysterious question of why Fawcett's color work is still fresh in spite of exposure that we hear of him and learn the secret.

Fawcett, engraver and printer, was not the first of the accomplished color-letterpress printers in England. Twenty years earlier, George Baxter (1804-

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67) was an admired color-printer. The Club owns several examples of Baxter's color work as well as a collection of his own wood engravings. Edmund Evans was equally admired, as he is even today, for his *A Chronicle of England*, 1864, of which we own a copy. But the work of neither of these greats possesses the brilliance and "transparent luminous" quality of Fawcett's. Up to and even after Fawcett, letterpress printers used linseed oil in mixing their inks, which sometimes stained the pages, and some used varnish instead of oil to achieve a surface "sparkle." The secret, as McLean discovered, was Fawcett's use of ox blood in the mixing of his color. McLean concludes that this helped keep the multi-colored woodcut printing as fresh today as when it was printed. McLean also notes that the use of ox blood allowed hand touch-up to some illustrations without its being apparent. Too often Fawcett's separate plates have been noted by collectors and dealers as Chromo-Litho prints!

We do not own a Fawcett, but hope to. The reproductions in this new book cannot hope to equal the original multi-colored printing, due to the limitations of process four-color printing.

We were pleasantly surprised with a gift from member and book dealer Jeffrey Thomas of a book we sorely wanted: *The Gehenna Press: The Work of Fifty Years, 1942-1992*. Jeffrey is not the only Club member involved in this "wonder" book; Colin Franklin, a Club member and the author of our 1978 *Themes in Acquaintance*, wrote the assessment of the press. Carroll Harris, notable Club member and proprietor of MacKenzie & Harris, set the type for Leonard Baskin's Gehenna Press projected thirty-two-volume Shakespeare in 30-point(!) Centaur. The size specified meant that each book would have to be set by hand, as 24 point was the largest Centaur on the machine. Only two plays were produced and the rest of the series killed. This took place in 1973 (details in a long note on page 90 of the book).

In the bibliography, Baskin contributes notes on books he liked and those he did not—with all his commentary set in 9-point type!

Bibliographers may find the unorthodox arrangement troublesome, but the bibliography is complete. The unjustified lines throughout this work may cause some annoyance, when lines too often end with a dangling hyphen. I suppose the cost of printing, with both black and white illustrations and some in full color, required this 240-page book to be cased in soft covers. We have made a stout slipcase to preserve it.

This "must" book was published by The Bridwell Library, Dallas, and The Gehenna Press, in 1992; Two thousand copies were printed by the Oxboro Press, Amherst.

Our sincere thanks to Jeffrey Thomas for this important book in modern illustration and bookmaking

ALBERT SPERISEN

The Club has just been given a wonderful binding, by member Duncan Olmsted, of the Book Club's *Holinshed's Chronicles*. It is bound in red morocco with symbolic roses as onlays. The doublures are the standard golden paper, surrounded by leather borders. We think that this book will make an excellent addition to the Club's library examples of local fine bindings, as it will join another of Duncan's bindings, R. L. Stevenson's *Silverado Squatters* of 1923. Thank you, Duncan, both for the binding and the gift.

The Club has just purchased a charming example of French Provincial printing, a copy of the *Fables* of Phaedrus published in Orleans by Louis Pierre Couret de Villeneuve, 1773, and printed in Fournier's Parisienne type. The printer-bookseller was one of the leading men in this profession in his town, as well as a playwright, with at least one play to his credit. The book is a fine example of French taste and, as described in the in the bibliography of Orleans printers, *très jolie*.

The Club is fortunate in having a great library nearby to consult for bibliographic purposes, at Berkeley, which had the microfilm of Henri Herluison's *Recherches sur les imprimeurs & libraires d'Orleans...* Orleans, H. Herluison, 1868. The original edition is one of 78 copies and one of the few books on this topic to be found. The Fournier type was determined by comparison to The Club's copy of his *Manuel typographique*, 1766.

BARBARA LAND

## ***We Want***

### **YOUR FAVORITE COOKBOOK!**

#### **THE BOOK CLUB'S HOLIDAY EXHIBITION**

*will feature cookbooks*

*submitted by our members exclusively.*

*The exhibit will be launched November 29 and  
will be on display in the Club rooms until January 7, 1994.*

So please send us your favorite cookbook, accompanied by a 3 x 5" card stating why this book, above all others, is your selection. All books and their owners will be listed in the *Quarterly News-Letter*.

The Book Club guarantees safe handling and return.

*Please send your entry to The Book Club of California  
no later than November 22, 1993.*

## Serendipity

Our lead article in this issue of *QN-L* concerns our publishing colleagues across the Bay, U.C. Press, so it is timely that we receive word from Sam Dorrance, former marketing director of the Press and now occupying the same position at Island Press of Washington, D.C. and Covelo, California. He sends along a lovely trade edition, *Faith in a Seed: The Dispersion of Seeds and Other Late Natural History Writings* of Henry David Thoreau, edited by Bradley P. Dean, secretary of the Thoreau Society, with a foreword by Gary Paul Nabham, a MacArthur Fellow and noted environmental author. Amazingly, this is the first publication of Thoreau's last manuscript and may be the beginning of a series of unpublished Thoreau writings, just as U.C. Press has successfully issued numerous volumes of the Mark Twain Papers. Thoreau was an early reader of the first American publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, May, 1860, by Appleton's in an edition of 2,500 copies. That begat the great union of Thoreau's botanical prose and Darwinian theory, or the marriage of poetic prose and science, all of which reads beautifully today, botanical infelicities notwithstanding. This is a beautifully designed and illustrated book as well. No price is mentioned but it appears that there will be two editions, deluxe and trade, so write to Island Press, 1718 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20009. And say hello to former Californian Sam Dorrance while you're about it.

From that connection we segue nicely into the presentation of the Sir Thomas More Medal for Book Collecting, May 9, 1993, to William J. Monihan, S.J., Director of Library Relations, University of San Francisco, he being the inspiration and founder of Gleeson Library Associates. The rare book collection of this great library is known worldwide. "Father Bill" is also the founder of the elegant annual Symposium Series at USF, usually numbering among its attendees people from all over the world. The August 1993 Symposium XXVI theme was again chosen by Father Bill, this time *Charles Darwin: The Evolution of Heart and Mind*. Back to the Sir Thomas More Medal and Father Bill's acceptance remarks: They are extraordinary in that they give credit to everybody else but Father Bill himself for building this world-class collection. And in a typical act of generosity, Father Bill gave me a copy of his manuscript just so I "would get the record straight." *QN-L* may do more than that: We intend to publish the entire manuscript in a future issue. Names and tales abound: David Magee (book dealer and past editor of *QN-L*) bringing the first important collection of rare books to the Gleeson; Barney Rosenthal (the source for the Gleeson's first edition of More's *Utopia* and a vital link with other booksellers); Jake Zeitlin (who introduced Father Bill to



the book collectors of Southern California); Warren Howell, Norman Strouse, Wilmarth Lewis, Ann and Reinhard Speck, Geraldine Cole and spouse Jerry, Albert Shumate, and on and on. Truly a joint effort, the record of Father Bill's life achievements.

And there's more: On 6th August 1993, the University of San Francisco, during the Charles Darwin Symposium, conferred upon Father Monihan the Doctor of Humane Letters Degree, *Honoris Causa*, just about the highest recognition the University can bestow. Congratulations, Father Bill, and Happy Eightieth Birthday a month hence!

Serendipity in quintessence: Your *QN-L* editor, attending the June 25th Conference of California Historical Societies in Madera, California, as a delegate of the Alameda County Historical Society, encountered venerable Book Club of California Director Mike Harrison, who received a special award for CCHS Charter Members, CCHS dating back to 1953. Mike's speech was a classic (and unabashedly plagiarized): "I have my address here in my pocket." [Pulling out a thick wad of papers] "It's Taos, New Mexico." End of speech. Mike sat down. And brought down was the house as well! Happy 96th birthday, Mike, and many more.

We are late to report to our readers that, recognizing the financial plight of some of our educational institutions, The Club has embarked on a program to provide a few copies of selected Club publications to certain California community college libraries. Forty-three community college libraries received notice of our offerings. The response was immediate and enthusiastic. What this means, of course, is that The Club's inventory of available publications is diminished. If you have been delaying purchase of a certain title or two, you may wish to place your order at an early date.

Among future book auctions we shall mention only two, both by Pacific Book Auction Galleries, 139 Townsend Street, Suite 305, San Francisco 94107. Catalogs, at \$10 each, are available on *Jack London*, November 11th, and *Cartography, Travel, Exploration, Natural History*, November 18th.

A note, too, from the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405-3301, announces several interesting exhibitions: Medieval Manuscripts Sampler (October 25-December 31), The Art of Bookbinding (January 5-April 30, 1994), and The Wizard of Oz (February 1-February 28, 1994). Tours of the Lilly Library are available by calling (812) 855-2452.

A lovely prospectus has just arrived from Peggy Gotthold's Foolscap Press, 1809 Ward Street, Berkeley 94703, describing forty-six (chosen from the 253 dialogues Petrarch completed near the end of his life) "dialogues by Francesco Petrarca" and titled *Phisicke Against Fortune: as well prosperous as adverse*. Ms. Gotthold is an exciting printer who served an internship with the Robertsons

at Yolla Bolly Press in Covelo. If the sample page in the prospectus is typical, this will be an absolutely stunning volume. The price is \$285, \$400 in quarter leather, or sheets for bookbinders at \$257. Telephone (510) 849-9294.

My personal copy of *Matrix 12: A Review for Printers and Bibliophiles*, published by John & Rosalind Randle of The Whittington Press, Lower Marston Farm, nr. Risbury, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0NJ 0885 400250, England, arrived recently. And safely. It is an extraordinarily beautiful volume, containing some two-dozen contributions by the stellar lights of Twentieth-Century printing history, led off by William Peterson and his "*The Library of Emery Walker*," which contains a devilish tip-in of Bernard Shaw in fixed gaze at May (Morris) Sparling, a telling photographic moment. This series is perhaps the finest project produced in printing history today and is beautifully executed. The price may seem dear at about £110 per volume, but there is surely no better example extant of the joys of fine printing. Whittington Press has a great number of customers in California, so we want to keep you informed, The next Whittington Press exhibition will be at the Centre for the Book, part of the new British Library. Precise dates to follow in QN-L.

HARLAN KESSEL

NOTICE: As this issue of QN-L goes to press, we still have not resolved the matter of the lost copies of our 199th Book, *On Printing by William Exerson*. Please be assured that we are doing our best to trace these books, which somehow went astray in the mail. If you have not received your copy and have not notified us, please do so. We appreciate your patience and hope to have good news before too long.

## The Feathered Serpent

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## *In Memoriam*

It is with great sadness that we announce the death, on June 3, 1993, of Dr. Reinhard Staniford (Stan) Speck. Dr. Speck became a member of The Book Club in 1957. Those who did not know him may wish to read (or reread) Adela Roatcap's article about this distinguished book collector and scholar in the Spring 1993 *Quarterly News-Letter*. Monday nights at the Book Club will sparkle less in his absence.

We have learned by letter from Ward Ritchie that long-time Book Club member Dr. Edgar Mauer died on June 21, 1993. Dr. Mauer was devoted to accumulating rare medical books for the library of the Los Angeles County Medical Association, now at the Huntington Library. He was past president of the Los Angeles Heart Association and on the teaching staff of the University of Southern California Medical School.

Mary Jane Wilson, known to her friends at The Club as Jane, died on July 23, 1993, after a courageous fight against cancer. She will be much missed. Jane enjoyed a distinguished international career as a librarian. She retired in 1981 to live in San Francisco, where she was active in the worlds of books and music. Friends might meet her at The Book Club of California, at the Roxburghe and Colophon Clubs, at the Gleeson Library Associates—on whose Board of Directors she served—or at the Opera House, where she volunteered in the Opera Boutique. She was also a past board member of the Pi Beta Phi Alumnae Club of San Francisco and an active member of the Metropolitan Club. Book Club friends will recall Jane's triumphant Monday evening reports of laps accomplished in the Metropolitan Club pool as well as her glowing accounts of the operas she loved and the travels she so enthusiastically pursued.

A memorial is to be held in October at the Metropolitan Club.

## ANNUAL MEETING

*The Annual Meeting of The Book Club of California will be held at noon on October 19, 1993. Members of the Club are invited to be present. The regular meeting of The Club's Board of Directors follows, and visitors are welcome to remain. Please let James Nance or Ann Whipple know if you plan to attend the Annual Meeting, and let us know what kind of sandwich we may order for you.*



*Elected to Membership**New Regular Members*

Robert Allgood	Vallejo	Alfred W. Newman
Hiram Ash	Colebrook, CT	Herman Cohen
Gregg T. Atkins	Fremont	Dr. Rudolph M. Lapp
Virginia Barrett	San Francisco	Ann Whipple
Janice Braun	Oakland	Adela Roatcap, Ph.D.
Benedict S. Budai	San Francisco	Richard Hilkert
James E. Crooks	Newport Beach	Jamie Person Macleod
June Oppen Degnan	San Francisco	Mr. & Mrs. Allen E. Meier, Jr.
Daniel Feeley	Palo Alto	Harry R. Goff
David Hull	San Francisco	Ray Brian
C.W.G. Johnson	Vaocluse, Australia	Derek McDonnell
Wolfgang Lederer	Kensington	Albert Sperisen
Michael Marston	San Francisco	Harry R. Goff
Mary Minow	Cupertino	Karl Vollmayer
Ramon G. Otero	Monrovia	Glen Dawson
Robert L. Reynolds	San Rafael	Harlan Kessel
Steven Sharafian	Lafayette	Peter Koch
Allan L. Smith, M.D.	San Francisco	Klaus-Ullrich S. Röttscher

The following members have transferred from Regular to Sustaining Member status:

Joseph Lebenzon, M.D.	Santa Cruz
Tad E. Lonergan, M.D.	Glendale
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Zelinsky	Belvedere

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LIST 18, *An Archive of unpublished illustrated books by San Francisco  
artist Franz Bergmann*

IN ADDITION short-title lists are available of an interesting Dulac collection, a solid Saroyan collection, & a very good run of children's books illustrated by Fern Bisel Peat the Ohio artist of the 1930s. If any or all of these topics are of interest, write, fax or call for your copy if you do not already receive my lists. As always I am actively seeking to purchase fine collections or single books of importance & will pay special attention to desiderata lists of private collectors. Please let me know how I can help you buy or sell good books.

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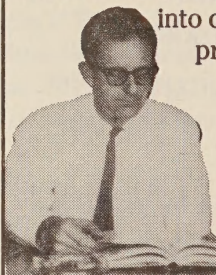
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## A Skeptic Among the Scholars

August Frugé On University Publishing

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